

January 20, 2004

Public Works Directors/Engineers
of All Cities and Counties

Public Works Emergency Response
Mutual Aid Agreement

Enclosed for your agency's consideration and adoption is a copy of the Public Works Emergency Response Mutual Aid Agreement. The purpose of the Agreement is to permit signatory agencies to make the most efficient use of their assets by enabling them to coordinate resources and to maximize funding reimbursement during disasters/emergencies. This document is in two parts: (1) the Agreement (to be officially adopted by your agency) and (2) the Reference Guide (not to be adopted but has suggested procedures for implementing the Agreement).

The need for an advanced coordination effort was brought to the forefront with the Northridge Earthquake disaster in California and the prediction of a major earthquake in Washington. A task force was convened to develop an expeditious way to best accomplish an advanced coordination effort. The task force included representatives from AWC, CRAB, cities, counties and WSDOT.

This agreement was created to enable agencies to assist other agencies on an as needed basis when they are faced with a disaster/emergency. When a disaster/emergency occurs public works agencies have the responsibility to maintain service and recover in the most expedient way. This can best be accomplished by preparation, coordination and cooperation with other public works agencies. Agencies are charged with coordinating their efforts, compiling damage and recovery information and reporting to the appropriate authority. Then the State requests aid and assistance from the federal government. This Agreement provides a mechanism for immediate response provided the responding agency has the resources and expertise necessary.

This Agreement provides for the development of the documentation necessary to seek the maximum reimbursement possible from the appropriate federal agencies. For instance, during the Mt. St. Helen's eruption, the City of Yakima requested resource assistance from King County. Because there was not an agreement in place prior to the disaster, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) could only reimburse the City of Yakima for King County resources at the city's rates. The City of Yakima's rates were approximately 42 percent lower than King County's. This resulted in the City of Yakima paying the difference. However, if both agencies had been signatory to this agreement, then FEMA would have reimbursed the City of Yakima for King County resources at King County's rates.

The listing of agencies' signatory to this mutual aid agreement will be maintained by WSDOT, Highways & Local Programs. Additions and deletions will be provided via email to signatory members. Highways & Local Programs will also provide access to the list of signatory agencies, the Agreement and the supporting Reference Guide on the Internet.

The draft was submitted to local agencies for review and the final Agreement has the concurrence of CRAB and AWC. Also, it has been reviewed and is supported by the Washington Counties Risk Pool and the Association of Washington Cities Risk Management Service Agency, is approved as to form by the Washington State Office of the Attorney General and has the support of the state's Department of Emergency Management.

Please forward an original or certified copy of the agreement to Ron Pate, Highways & Local Programs, PO Box 47390, Olympia, WA 98504-7390, so your agency can be added to the list. If you have any questions, contact Ron at (360) 705-7383.

Sincerely,

_____/S/_____

Kathleen Davis
Director
Highways & Local Programs Service Center

Concurrence to have this Public Works Emergency Response Mutual Aid Agreement enacted by local agencies.

_____/S/_____

Stan Finkelstein
Executive Director
Association of Washington Cities

_____/S/_____

Jay Weber
Executive Director
County Road Administration Board